

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re: Lee Simon

Art Unit: 3636

Serial No.: 10/534,550

Examiner: Hanh Van Tran

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Confirmation No.: 7162

Title: Modular Reconfigurable Appliance

Attorney Docket No.: Sim-1

Customer No.: 63704

Commissioner for Patents

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Please consider the following information:

Disclosure is made of a project designed and supplied by the inventor at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management:

- Floor plan showing standard UDS configuration (Item #306) and customized UDS configuration (Item #276)
- Schedule calling out utility distribution system for Items #276 and #306
- Specifications submitted as part of construction documents for the project for Items #276 and #306
- Photos of the installation following completion of construction.

Below is a brief review of the differences between #276 and #306, and how they relate to the present invention.

Item #306 uses the utility distribution system (UDS) in its originally intended and “standard” configuration whereby the utility chase is a full-height unit and is tied into the exhaust hood canopy. As can be seen in the photos and floor plan, the standard UDS is designed to offer easier access vs. that of a standard wall for access to utilities (i.e. plumbing and electrical lines) over the long term for modifications. Utilities run through the housing are accessed by the individual pieces of equipment. They are connected via “connectors,” either electric, water, or gas in most cases. Some feature quick-disconnects. The equipment that is connected to the UDS is only based on what presently exists in the marketplace. UDS systems are typically configured to support the equipment specified at time of opening. Changes can be made later if equipment is changed, but will still require the work of a skilled electrician or plumber.

The request had been for an island cooking suite, with additional flexibility over the long term to change equipment, but there was not a sufficient budget to purchase typical cooking suites. As a result, existing equipment, customized counters, and a substantially modified UDS were utilized to accomplish this request. It should be noted that this format of a UDS was never before developed or produced by the manufacturer. The UDS was fabricated to be only 42” high, feed with utilities from below, and NOT connected to the exhaust hood as per the typical configuration. Standard pieces of equipment were used on the center of the island, on each side, with customized counters on either end to “close off” the suite. The equipment interfaces with the UDS via standard connectors, which have been hidden in the design. To change out the equipment, welds and caulk must be broken to remove the obsolete or non-functioning piece of equipment. This was, however, the most flexible configuration at the time

of the design.

In contrast, the proposed system of the invention set forth in the present patent application offers a more integrated, simplified installation of the cooking pieces that would directly engage with the utility chassis and eliminate the need for additional connectors. Changes would be much easier as the equipment could be slid in or out without needing to break any welds or caulking. The connections would already exist (standardized cluster configuration), eliminating the need for licensed plumbers or electricians to be involved. Additionally, the fractional configuration would allow for the configuration of "appliances" within standard footprints that otherwise are not available in the industry. For example, a six burner range with a steamer base (as opposed to an oven base) does not currently exist. This could easily be accommodated in the proposed system of the invention. Further, the flexibility, interchangeability, and fractional capabilities all make the newly proposed system more appealing for long term installations.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Hess", written in a cursive style.

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